An Act of State: The Execution of Martin Luther King

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QOeSSWKDkI (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QOeSSWKDkI)

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William Pepper talked about his book *An Act of State: The Execution of Martin Luther King*, published by Verso. The book is about his friendship with Martin Luther King, Jr., their work together in opposing the Vietnam War and on the Poor Peoples Campaign, and Dr. King's assassination. Mr. Pepper argues that James Earl Ray, the man convicted of assassinating Dr. King, was only a "patsy" and that the men who conspired to kill Dr. King -- at least one of whom is still alive -- have never been brought to justice. Mr. Pepper also talks about the 1999 wrongful death lawsuit brought, and won, by the King family against Memphis restaurant owner Lloyd Jowers, on the grounds that he conspired to kill Dr. King. He answered questions from members of the audience following his remarks.

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twenty years after James Earl Ray was convicted mr. pepper sets out to clear him detailing a case that accuses the FBI the CIA the US military the Memphis Police and local and national organized crime leaders this talk from a current affairs bookstore in San Diego is an hour ten minutes our speaker this evening is an English barrister and an American lawyer who practices international human rights law from London he has represented governments and heads of states and appears as an expert on international law issues a close friend of dr. Martin Luther King he also remains to this day a close friend of the King family he convenes a seminar on international human rights in Oxford England so here this evening to talk about his book an act of state the execution of Martin Luther King were very pleased to introduce mr. William pepper good evening thank you for coming and tearing ourselves away from the State of Union address so much deja vu let me try to set the tone this all of this work of mine started really with Vietnam and Martin Kings relationship and Association we meet in the last year of his life was triggered by Vietnam land and we try to just set the tone for the passion that he felt about that war because it's I think very appropriate today there was a there was a a poem that moved him very much and very deeply and some of you may know it it starts off I come and stand at every door but

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off I come and stand at every door but no one hears my silent tread I knock and yet remain unseen for I am dead I am dead I was only seven when I died in Hiroshima long ago when children died I was seven then as I am now when children die they do not grow my hair was scorched by swirling flame my eyes grew dim my eyes grew blind death came and turned my bones to dust and I was scattered by the wind all that I ask is but for peace you fight today you fight today so that the children of this world might live and grow and laugh and play now when I came back I was a freelance journalist as really as a kid in in Vietnam and I came back never published anything when I was there had to leave because of where I chose to spend my time when I was in that country and became of a security risk in some ways I suppose and a piece a piece called the children of Vietnam was included in a magazine called ramparts some of you may recall the old progressive mac ramparts magazine that was published by Warren Hinkle in San Francisco on January 1967 that came out and during that month Martin King was on his way to the West Indies and he was sitting at the airport in Atlanta with Bernard Lee and his bodyguard and going through his mail and in that mail was a copy of ramparts magazine and his his food was waiting to be eaten in front of him and he starts scanning through the magazine and it was was the photographs that stopped him I took many photographs when I was when I was there of burned children and

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was there of burned children and shrapnel eyes civilians particularly women and when he saw the photographs Bernard said he pushed his food away and said they gave it vague sigh and burn answer what's wrong Martin the food is not good you're not hungry he said I can never be hungry again he said I just can't Bernard until I do something about this war this war must end he had of course been opposing it instinctively for a long time but he now consolidated that opposition he asked to meet with me and for the for the times every times that we met he asked to see other photographs files notes I'd taken and I shared them with him and I remember on the way to to Cambridge from Providence Rhode Island where he delivered a sermon and Brown Chapel we wrote to Cambridge where Vietnam summer was going to be opened that was one of the anti-war movements of organizations up at Harvard and I was going through material with him in the car in the way and he it was too much he just openly wept and I'd become hardened by it because I had been amongst it for a period of time and I and but to him he never he never could accept it and he became very emotional about this thing so then he delivered his speech on the 4th of April 1967 at Riverside Church and before he did that he said to me he said to me bill will you come down to Ebenezer and will you take the pulpit and will you speak to my people I thought he'd gone round the bed and I said what's ready what do you got you want a hunky from the north to come down talk to your people he says yes you must come down and talk to those is why this is silly they're your people Martin you talk to

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they're your people Martin you talk to them you've always talked to them and he waved his finger and I forget he waved his finger in front of Isis no he said no you've been there you've seen it you must tell them what I have to do and they'll listen to you and that brought loss of words to me and I so I went to Eman even spoke to them and explained why I respectfully thought their pastor had to oppose this war which he then did and the last year of his life I was the only year that I knew him we work closely together because he was willing to take every opportunity to to organize and to encourage the end of the war so it was thought it was planned to have a National Conference for new politics was an umbrella organization he asked me to lead it and become its director and it was to bring together from all over the country people who were committed to peace and justice it was a grassroots movement but it stretched across the socio-economic range of American society there were 5000 delegates that eventually came to the Palmer House in Chicago on Labor Day 1967 the goal Oh politically to produce a king Spock ticket as an alternative to the Johnson administration's reelection and we were so naive in those days Martin keynoted the convention and as he was speaking a note was passed to me and I looked at this note and it said get him out of here as soon as he finishes speaking or we will take him hostage and humiliate him

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will take him hostage and humiliate him before the world that note came from a black caucus which had been formed and put together before the convention but greeted each member of the black community and black delegations that came in and took them into a separate headquarters in a separate room and so there was a tight unified black caucus and that note came from the black caucus we didn't know at the time of course that the black that black caucus had been consisted of the leadership of Jean provocateur who were in the pay of the government of the United States and in the poverty program Richard Daley in Chicago and included members of the Blackstone Rangers gangs in Chicago and that the whole idea was to come to this convention and break it up and defeat it and so what they what they did was to introduce the most extreme resolutions possible and it had the effect of driving away all the funding for that new politics movement so it was basically over before it began that that great political movement and and was fragmented although it limped along for the course of the year but as a political movement had ended now when Martin was killed on April 4 1968 I went to the memorial Ben Spock and I went together to the memorial and then to the funeral funeral service in Atlanta and Ben and Julian Bond and some others I think went up to Bobby Kennedy suite and Bobby had invited me to to come up because he of course had declared for the presidency and was even flirting

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the presidency and was even flirting with the idea that Martin King might be a roomie a running late for him I didn't go to Bobby Kennedy suite I'd known him some years earlier when I was an even younger person and I and didn't like him I actually handled a campaign of his I was his citizens chairman in one of New York state's counties and I regret I didn't go now because Bob Kennedy in between 1964 and 68 I think was a very different person I think he grew in enormous ways so I couldn't I had had it with with political activity in life and so I just walked away did a number of other things ten years later Ralph Abernathy said to me out of the blue I want to go and see James Earl Ray I want you to interrogate him and I want to watch him and listen to his answers because I have some questions about James Earl Ray's guilt I said Ralph it's ten years later with you hat why do you have these questions now and and what has developed I never got a satisfactory answer for that just do it for me will you build so I know thinking about the case I said I know I had assumed they always had the right man and never gave it a second thought as you know and just turned my back and then it but it's something if you were Hosea needed an extra body at a demonstration or a March or something I'm happy that was happy to to come along and help but that was the extent of it took several months for me to get it caught up to speed on the information about the case and the history of it and the facts and I did a lot of reefa so we did go five six months later it was in August 78 Roger that all ggest 1978 first time I saw James alright Ralph

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first time I saw James alright Ralph Abernathy in a body language specialist from Harvard was the psychiatrist who sat in the corner and just watched James every move as I put him through a rather rigorous interrogation and of course his lawyer at that time was Mark Lane and Mark was presence at off to the side didn't intervene at all well we came away from that five-hour session Abernathy and I with a distinct belief that this man was not the shooter we didn't know what other role he might have played in the killing and we didn't know how what is what it whether he was a he whether he was used as a patsy or whether he was a willing conspirator didn't didn't have a sense of that but we had the feeling distinct that he was not the shooter it came from it was visceral but it also was factual and he was very different you know he was very different from the man we had read about and we had heard about he was not aggressive he was not brutish he wasn't didn't have didn't appear to have any traces of overt racism in fact he was docile he was quiet spoken he was even shy a very different kind of person than we had expected but he raised so many questions in my mind about the official story and his own guilty plea scenario that I decided I would start to look into this and see what was possible find out what I could so I started going into Memphis from time to time and hanging out in South Main Street in the area of the Lorraine Motel and going over into the black sections of South Memphis and talking to witnesses meeting people and trying to

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witnesses meeting people and trying to get a sense of the answers to questions that had not been properly asked or answered and the whole range of them like the whole issue of the bushes behind Jim's grill where Marvin Jim's grill was a cafe that backed onto the Mulberry Street and the Lorraine Motel was there right behind it and supposedly bushes were cut down and in the morning afterward why were those bushes cut down the whole series of whole series of questions about that like like that that arose so I started this investigation and it became a slippery slope because the deeper I got into it the more questions I found and I couldn't answer so I kept going and going and I kept going back to see see James Earl Ray and I kept asking him to clarify to to answer new issues that that I had found questions and James tried always the best of his ability he kept asking me to represent him well I refused to do that for 10 years between 78 and 88 I refused to represent James because I said to him very frankly until I'm convinced that you were totally an unknowing Patsy and not a knowing conspirator I'm not going to represent you logistically I had problems doing this time because I was living in England I was at Cambridge living in Cambridge for 21 20 years I had gone to England and so I had to keep coming back and forth I I raised three children at Cambridge and now

then they were very tiny which was actually one of the reasons I left but we I I made this trip over a period of the ten years and finally got enough information to convince myself that this man was an unknowing Patsy that he had been used Hiba nipple aided and controlled he'd been set up and so finally 1988 I

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he'd been set up and so finally 1988 I agreed to represent James over and I represented him for the last ten years of his life he died in prison in 1998 and we tried to get him a trial for all of the period of time and failed took his case to the Supreme Court and we we finally would turn down there only 3 years after I came on to represent him and then the idea of a television trial came up and so in 1992 Thames television in England and HBO here in the United States sponsored a trial the trial of James Earl Ray and the judge was Marvin Frankel old tough old former federal judge prosecutor was Hickman Ewing jr. name may ring a bell with you because he was ken starr's number 2 for period of time on the Whitewater investigation and he's a former US Attorney so Hickman prosecuted I defended and we went at it I strictly under Tennessee Criminal Code and hearing strictly to that code jury came from all over the country and so it wasn't a local jury and they and we screened them we went through the usual exclusion process took the jury seven hours after 10 days of trial took them seven hours to find James Earl Ray not guilty with a fraction of the evidence that was to emerge over the last ten years so probably never heard about that a few of you may have heard about it because it was never reported it was never covered the media never treated that in any way at all as a news story it was regarded as entertainment and even then that was

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as entertainment and even then that was not I was not covered and this has been the history of this case and that's in the investigation and the results is that there is an embargo in the United States with respect to this story the book the first book written in 1995 orders to kill was never reviewed in America this book will not be reviewed in America so when it comes to those kinds of national security issues very sensitive issues it's very difficult to get the story out in the mainstream after the trial the television trial witnesses started to come forward pieces other pieces started to be planned put in place a man called Loyd Jowers was suddenly cast into the frame he was the manager of Jim's grill I had found four witnesses finally independently who implicated jours in the killing of Martin Luther King Towers knew about this and decided he was going to be indicted and asked his lawyer to go and get him immunity from prosecution and he would then tell everything so his lawyer goes trotting over to the district attorney general's office and says you know I represent mr. Lloyd ours and he's very much involved in the assassination of Martin Luther King but he knows everything that happened around his premises where it was planned and who was involved locally and he's prepared to give you all that information but only needs his immunity well not only did ours not get immunity from prosecution but he was never interviewed by the district attorney general showers were still frightened so he tried to push the envelope a little bit and he was able to appear on an ABC program called primetime lives run by a fella called Sam Donaldson who was a peculiarly independent guy in terms of

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peculiarly independent guy in terms of that program showers told his story about how he was approached by a local produce man named Frank Liberto was a member of the marchello family marchello family organization he worked for them he was one of their one of their guys their lieutenants in Memphis and Liberto offered him $100,000 and called in a big new bill he had a big debt I later found out what that debt was and in exchange for that showers was going to do everything he was told he was going to allow his facilities to be used for the planning the staging of the assassination of Martin Luther King and showers agreed and he went along with it and he covered his his whole role and eventually of course Loyd Jowers has told everything to dexter king and myself to Andrew Young and Dexter King separately and he admitted the scope of his involvement in this conspiracy so we now had the marchello organization pretty clearly in the frame and it was looking like a contract killing contract killing carried out by a Memphis Police Department officer who was paid to do it so we moved beyond a hours to reach out to other witnesses who came forward

and one of them told us about living in Houston Texas and knowing a fellow called Raoul and becoming friendly with Raoul and his cousin Armando and going to the docks in Houston and taking boxes of weapons and helping transport them to a house where they were repackaged and apparently sent into South America for a profit-making operation and she

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for a profit-making operation and she didn't know where the weapons came from or anything but she knew about this operation and she told them Horror Story one time she said she was at the house where she was unloading these weapons and she put her keychain on the on the kitchen table where they were around where they they were sitting and one of the guys picked it up and looked at it I had the photographs in the little plastic circle of John Kennedy Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King and he looked at this and he threw it to Raul Raul grabbed it looked at it and became she said totally and furious threw it on the floor jumped up stamped on it and said that I killed that [__] once looks as though I'm going to have to do it again pulled out a gun and grabbed Glenda who had known this man for quite a period of time and took her into a bedroom off the kitchen and raped her and she was totally frightened appalled and didn't know what this was all about but it obviously led her to believe quite clearly that this man had some involved in the killing of Martin King and she set this whole story yeah she didn't tell anybody about this for many years you have to understand one of the the reasons that this case has now come to the point where it's effectively solved is that somehow people have become willing to come forward after many years and talk the first witness to implicate Loyd Jowers betty spades knew what happened in 1968 and didn't tell it to me until 1992 and I had known Betty since 1978 though Lloyd had tried to keep me away from her which made me more and more suspicious but what actually

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and more suspicious but what actually happened with Betty was she had an affair with Lloyd and she had tried to keep an eye on him and she thought that Thursday afternoon that when he wasn't in the grille that maybe he was out fooling around and the bushes was one of the the the ladies of the night who used to hang out there around the motel because the motel in those days was also a we call a hot sheet place I suppose it was used for for those kinds of Italian sirs so she said well I didn't see him so I decided I was going to go look and and and find him and and she found the door to the kitchen closed which was unusual and then she found the back door open which was also unusual and as she got to the back door and started to look out just before she looked out she heard a shot and then as she looked out she saw Lloyd coming running straight from the bushes toward her carrying a still smoking rifle he brushed pastor came inside broke it down and as he broke it down he looked at her and he said you wouldn't ever do anything to hurt me would you and she says no Lloyd you know of course I would know he didn't hurt you is it good and then he took the shell and threw it into the the commode the toilet in the back off the kitchen there I tried to flush it it stopped up the toilet gave him a problem and he had to deal with Ben he took the gun that out and put it under the counter where it remained well betty was terrified she she kept this to herself because she knew Lloyd she believed Lloyd killed Martin Luther King she didn't know he'd taken the gun from the shooter she thought he had actually done it so she kept this to herself all those years afraid and once she said he did send someone to try to kill her but it was more likely was just going to intimidate her not been on to kill her so it's taken a long time for much of this

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it's taken a long time for much of this evidence to come out after the television trial there appeared in the Memphis commercial appeal an article long article by a writer named Steve Tompkins Steve had spent a year and a half researching the infiltration surveillance and monitoring of black civil rights leaders and black community activists and black community leaders he spent a year and a half investigating the infiltration and the monitoring of these leaders by army intelligence and he came to learn that this was a program there was a program of surveillance of particularly black leaders after the second and second end of the second

decade the 20th century because of the fear that the Russian Revolution was going to come to American soil and its prime recruiting warriors might well be discontented black minority citizens so they kept them the leaders under surveillance for a long time so the quantal Pro in the in the 60s 50s and 60s is something that's not nothing not unusual has historical precedent in the course of that whole article which dealt then with with modern surveillance of King and the wiretapping and all of that whose movements there was a tiny little paragraph that said and in Memphis Tennessee on the 4th of April 1968 there was an alpha 184 team a six-man alpha 184 team and he said and no one has ever explained what that team was doing there so I went to see Steven this for the first time I had ever heard of any possible involvement of anyone other than the Mafia in terms of the killing of King so I went to see Steve and I asked him to help me cause James was in

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asked him to help me cause James was in prison we won't try to get my tralala and he refused he said no these are very bad people worst 18 months of my life I don't anything to do with it and I just kept going back to him kept being but persistent finally said yes CAIR I will I'll help you and then for quite a period of time that the arrangement was I would give him questions he knew nothing about the assassination the details of it I'd give him questions and he would go to two of his contacts were members of that team give them the questions they agreed they would answer them and he would bring them back and we went on this work they would never meet with me because I was James's lawyer and they lived in Mexico they had fled in the 70s because they thought a clean-up operation was on so Steve made these trips all the time and a picture started to emerge which indicated that there was an official involvement although the killing was in fact a mafia contract killing that there was an official involvement there was coordination and there were two photographers on the roof of the fire station which was a diagonally crossed the street from the Lorraine who photographed everything so we now learned that there are photographs of the assassination of Martin King including a photograph the assassin and we made again through Steve contact with both photographers one lives in Costa Rica and eventually we mean a goat try to negotiate the acquisition of those photographs and eventually they broke down because at one point there was a security breach and Steve was followed on to a critical meeting and by two FBI agents of a local field office in Miami and they one of them stuck a long lens out the passenger side of the car and just spooked the photographer who took

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just spooked the photographer who took off and that ended those negotiations we we did file a Freedom of Information Act suit or colleagues are minded and was denied that the photographs ever existed so yeah this kind of evidence began to pile up and in 1995 I published where we were in terms of the the state of the information at that point in time and in in a book called orders to kill this work act of state is the end of the story in terms of the assassination of Martin King so far as we are concerned in 1999 we tried a civil case against Loyd Jowers and other conspirators known and unknown you've probably never heard of that trial either that trial took place because the King family decided around 96 after carefully considering it and being somewhat aware of my work over the years that it was time to try to get a trial for James Earl Ray because he was he was dying of liver disease and so the King family came out in favor of a drop of gems and there was a fair amount of publicity about that that people probably know that and that failed because James died we could have kept him alive I had negotiated a liver transplant position for him at the University of Pittsburgh and I put in an application to the court to allow him to be transferred transported to the University of Pittsburgh where the operation would take place he qualified he at all he met all of their criteria and we offered to pay all the expenses of course and we were denied permission he was denied the liver transplant that he needed to live so he died in 1998 and

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he needed to live so he died in 1998 and I guess we figured well this is the end of the road isn't it what are we what do we do now and I met with the family and at length and I said there is they said we have any options is there's only one option and that is we could sue loads hours we have enough evidence to get a lawsuit going against him and to bring him to court and sue him on on a civil case wrongful law wrongful death charge so we did that we filed it and about a year after filing in 98 it's a year after filing the case came up and it came up before the judge that we wanted it to come before a man called Swearengen a black judge one of the few independent judges in that judicial system who was going to retire shortly in fact this became his last case so judge Swearengen heard the case we started to try it on a November 10th I guess it was we tried this case for 30 days 70 witnesses proceeded to that to testify under oath 70 witnesses over 30 days and it took a jury 59 minutes to find for the King family against Loyd Jowers and other conspirators known and unknown and the whole all of the evidence gathered finally under oath is on the good website of the King Center the King Center calms 4,000 pages of testimony and so there is that historical record which what doesn't do James any good but at least it laid out the the whole scenario of the case and it and it dealt with all of the nuances all of the evidence which is maybe too much to go into here but we can talk I

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much to go into here but we can talk I can answer questions if you want but it included evidence of two eyewitnesses who saw James Earl Ray driving away from the scene 20 minutes before the killing as he always had said he done evidence about the weapon which was not the Throwdown gun which was not the weapon evidence about the existence of Raoul Raoul exists he's alive and well and four different independent verification of Raoul from a photograph that a inside intelligence agent kindly provided quietly to me and this was a photograph at James Earl Ray saw 1978 and a 10 find in 1978 then there were two newspaper articles I said James Earl Ray has identified Easter finally after seeing hundreds has identified a photograph of the man he claims controlled him Raoul well on the back of that photograph was a name this had been sent an ominously anonymously to James and there was a name on the back of the photograph and the name was the name of someone else so obviously this in 78 was the time of the select committee hearings the congressional hearings what they hoped would happen was James would see this photographs yes say that's Raul and look on the bottom and this is his real name and then have a press conference and announced that and of course then they blow him out of the water his credibility would be gone but he didn't do that he didn't take the name he just said this is the photograph and so I showed it to him when I showed it to him in 95 96 he said yes that's the same one and identified then this is Raul English merchant seaman identified him as being in the same bar up in Montreal where James said he always said he met him so one after another his own daughter when confronted at the door with the photograph said well anybody could get that photograph of my father so she identified the photograph of her father Glenda Grabow identified this is the man

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Glenda Grabow identified this is the man who raped her not only that she called him on the telephone and spoke with him for nine minutes and we talked about old times so he's alive and well but when he knew we were on to him all of a sudden government agents appeared at his house and a Portuguese reporter interviewed his wife was amazed to find her saying this has been hell for us but you know the government the United States has been so kind and so good they send these people and would tell us how to answer questions they might they tap our phones they they've done such wonderful things we thought this is a retired assembly line automobile worker all right and why would he why would the government be doing all these things for this man so I mean the the evidence Mountain goes on and on and it's some the cases is pretty clear the facts are pretty clear at this point Memphis Police Department officers who are involved we're pretty clear it's also pretty clear that no one wants to prosecute and has ever wanted to prosecute and that the official story it's been defended by publicist forever and the Attorney General of the United States did a report following the trial which again confirmed the the official story the family wanted a Truth and Reconciliation Commission clintus the president clinton turned it over to his attorney general and the story has has maintained itself ever since but i think for me one of the most important aspects of this book orders

to kill is not this the solution to the murder of Martin Luther King and who killed him it's one the lessons that we can draw from this type of government activity against a man who became intolerable and he was intolerable not

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intolerable and he was intolerable not only because he opposed the war in Vietnam but more because he was going to bring a half-million of the most wretched of our citizens to Washington to camp there to live there in a tent city and go every day up the hill to see their congressmen and their representatives and try to get put back into the budget social programs which have been taken out and they were going to go up and come back and go up and come back and the the the forces the security law enforcement intelligence forces in the imposition in government were convinced that Martin King would lose control of that group that they would become so angry as they became rebuffed that they would become violent and they would become a revolutionary force and they didn't have enough troops to put down that revolution Westmoreland wanted 200,000 they couldn't give them to him they didn't have the troops they couldn't do it so Martin King was never going to be allowed to go to Memphis from Memphis to Washington he was he was going to finish there his room was changed from a lower courtyard room to about exposed balcony room he was well and truly set up and virtually no security at all didn't think about that in those days his rooms were monitored and wired in the hotel as with one on either side of him he was a sitting duck and the story that came back from these two officers was that they were briefed at Camp Shelby Mississippi at 4:30 in the morning of April 4th they were shown two photographs one of Martin King and one of andrew young and these were the two targets but the snipers and their spotters had in their crosshairs at the time the shot came from the bushes each one thought the other did it when they found out it was some what they call wacko civilian later on they were they

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wacko civilian later on they were they were non-plus they didn't know what what had what had happened they were they really only a backup operation there next morning early the brushes were cut down deputy public works director testified under oath yeah I was called and I was asked to send a team in there to help the police and it was a crime scene so I knew sanitized it yeah well they just told us what to do our people just cut down all the bushes and cleaned it's not know there were no traces of anything anymore so well and truly covered up has been this assassination but it's important for Americans understand and not only America is because this happens this happens throughout history and throughout the world but this is our country this is our time and it's important to understand that these things have happened and do continue to happen and and will continue to happen perhaps unless there's an aware citizenry to do something about it the second most important aspect of this work in my view is a chapter that deals with the roots of Martin Luther King because when you when you understand where he came from and the kind of person he was you also understand what a great loss this has been a loss that has been irreplaceable for all of these years and how he is missed and his real mentor historically was not Gandhi Gandhi was his tactical mentor in terms of non-violence but his real mentor was John Ruskin the Victorian British political economist who was so committed to the redistribution of wealth and the provision of economic assistance to the least well-off in any society that he waged campaigns and everywhere he could in England even though he was known as the greatest art art historian an art critic of his day Ruskin had this enormous feeling for the poor and what

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enormous feeling for the poor and what had to be done for a humane in a humane society how they could not be neglected so Martin's roots go back to Ruskin and if we were we can take him further back even into classical times he believed that you know we should take this neighborhood that we have built technologically and now electronically and we should make it into a brotherhood but he didn't see us going that way he saw us using a coated thorough or fee sauce using unimproved means improved means to reach unimproved ends and he was horrified at the evil of war racism and injustice and would not

compromise lost great sums of money and because of this commitment the motto that I chosen for the seminar I convened at Oxford University is non nobis solum naughty sumus which is a Latin phrase which says we exist not for ourselves alone one of Martin's favorite poets was John Donne who wrote that famous poem no man is an island and the least the least of any person on earth who is harmed or hurt is a harm injury to myself that was the philosophy of Martin King and he lived it to the end and he was committed to the end to accomplishing those goals and he died in the process thank you I'm glad to answer

00:44:01 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QOeSSWKDkI&t=2641s)

the process thank you I'm glad to answer any questions that you have yes he was tracing out James Earl Ray's brothers he thought there'd be some evidence or something there did you ever talk with the brothers or know much about that's that's story I know the brothers of course well I don't know John no one I mean John is a very erratic chap so I don't I don't know he's been out of the picture so I don't really know him but course I've known Jerry ray for almost all of the time yes and Jerry was always very supportive of his brother I'm very loving toward James and did everything he could to help him but Jerry knew very little when James escaped from prison he made his way to Canada he wasn't interested in staying in the United States at all he was trying to get out of North America and that's where he was in Montreal when he met Raoul who talked him into working for him part-time but Jerry was I believe kept very very largely in the dark and of all of these things yeah yes but anyway my question is what did what did James Earl Ray think or what did yeah he I'm sure had some ideas about who actually did kill Martin Luther King and and I would be curious to find out what and who you think actually did it who who dropped the dime and got the Mafia involved I know the government uses the Mafia and many many circumstances you have any thoughts about I'm sure you know well there are a couple of there are a couple of questions there absolutely well James in that kind of situation the situation which he was James would know only what he needed to know in order to do what he had to do and so as a result he was told

00:46:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QOeSSWKDkI&t=2760s)

had to do and so as a result he was told very little remember he was an escaped convict on the run and he was in a position where he could ask questions this guy was feeding him money keeping him going bought him a car so he would be told what he was needed what he needed to know nothing nothing like that and and and he was he was moved around and he did things okay so that and I'm sure that happens in many many instances right with respect to dropping the dime or as you put it or who killed Martin Luther King when the decision was taken to kill King in my view the coordination was put in the hands of a little-known military intelligence group that is housed in the bowels of the Pentagon and that group under its under its Colonel organized that effectively a task force operation that group was also involved in a joint venture with a marchello organization the guns were stolen that were sold were stolen from our military bases in Arsenal's and forts they were trucked into Marcela's organization come around to be taken off at Houston the profits as I am was told were so were split 50-50 so there was a joint venture relationship between them but more than that James Earl Ray's alias was not an alias was an identity he was given an actual identity of a man called Eric Galt Eric Galt had high national security clearance in the United States he was the warehouse men at Union Carbide plant in Canada outside of Toronto the nine this military intelligence group the Pentagon was working with him on various operations at the this very time James was given this man's identity why would he be given this man's identity well we can only surmise that and probably because

00:48:01 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QOeSSWKDkI&t=2881s)

only surmise that and probably because if he was ever stopped and James is clumsy and he made mistakes that's how he ended up in prison he was often too late for a robbery he was going to pull my reading that the safe would be locked let's say it was a time lock on the safe Jeff will give you our money Jim said I want your money well the safe is locked this happened to Jack he would seem ended up being late he was clumsy only carried five bullets in his pistol he once he admitted to me or with embarrassment that he kept the firing pin chamber empty because he shot himself in the foot once so he said I cannot do that there's no bullet yeah

and so when the prosecutor at the television trial said to him what would you do you say you couldn't kill anybody you've never killed anybody no if I used to shoot squirrels when I was a kid with my father's 22 well you couldn't kill anybody what would you do if you came into my store and you pointed a gun at me and I pulled the gun flick and I pointed my gun at you what would you do you wouldn't shoot me he said I'd say let's make a deal okay this is the nature of this of this guy so he was very much given that identity so if he was ever stopped when they ran a check on him he would they would be told to let him go let him go well I I didn't I've not gotten into any investigation of any of the respects the nation's I had my hands full with this one and a man in prison yes can we hear some of the details of the denial of the liver transplant well it was it was unprecedented it had never been done he didn't have a right under law the Commissioner the Department of Corrections did not have the statutory authority to allow it to happen I mean there's a whole range of a whole range of specious reasons that that they used just like they took charge Judge Joe Brown off the case on

00:50:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QOeSSWKDkI&t=3000s)

charge Judge Joe Brown off the case on the eve he was about to grant us a trial they took Joe Brown off and did it without allowing oral argument before the court of appeal in Tennessee they took him off just in the night that decision was made yes yes the FBI's role in the killing of Martin Luther King was in my view to cover it up and their role was the was the cover-up they took control of the investigation and basically perpetuated the cover-up mr. Hoover sent one of his personal agents best agents as a liaison to senior military officer in the intelligence wing and that man kept going back and forth and back and forth he effectively seconded this man and he knew everything that was going on he was not involved in the on-the-ground details and the organization of those details at all and my view but he then controlled in the investigation but I think he concurred and I think he believed from the outset that the only way that Martin King could be dealt with effectively was to be killed and he said that more than once to a friend of his HL hunt an oil man and I had witnesses who used to hunt administrative assistant used to be present at a number of those those meetings between Hoover and hunt and hunt used to have a private line phone in his desk just just to Hoover and Hoover gave hunt his through the director of security so they were very close and hunt used to think what we can stop king by my life line programs he had a program they used to broadcast and Hoover would give him scurrilous material and Hunt would put it out on the air you know and and so

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it out on the air you know and and so Hunt thought this was gonna do it Hoover said that's not going to do it we got to take other other steps let me just go to someone else yes there's about this and and all that you've realized about the state of mind of our government whereas that left you personally philosophically and what lessons have you learned well it's I've learned to be I've learned to be cynical and skeptical I'm a first-generation American my parents emigrated here from Ireland and I grew up as as a Kazakh as a kid believing everything that one is taught in school well the American Dream have a thing my life was a little different in that when I was 12 I was baseball player I mean I played baseball the Columbia and I'm cause if I was a ballplayer and basketball and baseball and then but when I was 12 I loved that game so much that I wanted to play all summer and I lived in a middle-class neighborhood and the kids wouldn't play so anyway I could play was I'd take my brown sandwich bag and I go into crosstown on trolley car into the ghetto and I I would play there all day with with black kids so I had an advantage that a lot of white middle-class kids didn't have because I began to see how people lived and I began to wonder why they lived like this yeah I remember seeing her be throw his chute or rat they run across the living room floor and I never seen a rat in a living room before you know so I know that was so I had I had I regard that as an advantage not only for my skills as a ballplayer but for my growth as as a human being so I think you have to become when you go through these kinds of experience you have to become skeptical and you have to question everything and have no illusions about

00:54:02 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QOeSSWKDkI&t=3242s)

everything and have no illusions about power and I I now I'm very unhappy to see the course that this Empire is taking because it is an empirical force and I see a lot of the same remember Rome was a republic first yeah and its went into empirical room and so we see a lot of the same with a lot of the same thing so I think citizens have to be alert they have to more than anything you have to teach your children teach your children teach your children to question because long after we're all gone we know we must have them teach their children and this otherwise this oral tradition will will be useless yes how do you feel about today's political leaders representing the legacy of a Martin Luther King political I'm sorry how do you feel about today's leaders representing the legacy of Warren King well it's politically opportunistic isn't it I mean it's it's useful for them to do it anyone who can ride on the legacy bandwagon of Martin King is going to do it people who hated him and disdain for him when he was alive civil rights leaders you know walked away from him when he was alive he called me Ray late at night after a Riverside speech and said you know they're all gone now they've all told me not to do this all my brothers my friends were tormented so we got to build this new team because they're all gone this is not the thing to do to attack this this government so you know I almost became ill one time when we were arguing and a parole hearing for James and the prosecutor District Attorney General attended and he went on about how much this nation

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he went on about how much this nation but lost Martin King was killed you know and I knew the man's roots and but that's what politicians and political figures do isn't it that's what we have to learn to understand yes as a close friend of dr. King what do you think if he was around today his involvement if any would be with the current anti-war movement against the war in Iraq and what do you expect that he'd say to us as citizens what are judi should be as Americans well I don't have any doubt if he were around today he would be very much active in the leadership against the Iraqi adventure and he would work in every way he possibly could you know to to stop that war or to prevent it from happening or to preempt it or discontinue it once it started because he would know what the results will be and we all should know what the results will be we're going to once again witness the slaughter of thousands upon thousands of innocents before there is ever any military engagement there will be an engagement of our military with the civilians of the of Iraq once more an ancient and ancient civilization irrespective of its leadership and ancient civilization and people's what we're talking about here you know the Sumerians ancient civilization of Sumeria 6,000 years ago had its roots and them in the southern part of Iraq Babylon is Iraq so we're about to destroy not only a people live warm breathing human beings of tender ages mostly nor the most vulnerable but we're going to remake and restructure an ancient civilizations symbols and heritage yes yes was the

[00:58:03 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QOeSSWKDkI&t=3483s)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QOeSSWKDkI&t=3483s)

symbols and heritage yes yes was the freedom of information act any help at all to you when you were investigating the case and when you were writing your books No when it comes to the question was that if you heard the question the question was is the Freedom of Information Act any help when we were doing research and the answer was no freedom of information that can be used in a number of matters and it is possible to use it but when it comes to very very sensitive cases and issues like this it's not it's not a huge falar as I'm I'm concerned yes from from John Kennedy to Paul Wellstone we all sort of know when a gut-level who and what is behind all this do you think it'll ever reach a critical mass to the point where it all comes out and and you know there's really an investigation and the people who are behind it are really taken to task punished for it not absent a revolution you know mr. Jefferson said you need a revolution every 20 years you know and when Jack Kennedy held a meeting in the White House of all the Nobel Prize winners they had had them all for dinner one night he toasted them and he he well fed and he said ladies and gentlemen never before have so many brilliant minds gathered at this table to dine except for mr. Jefferson dined alone Jefferson with all of the imperfections that we all carry believed that you had the cleanse a government and agents and people in power every 20 years however you have to do that well of course we have not done that there's no sign that we're going to do that power has consolidated to a point in the United States today where it's primary

01:00:01 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QOeSSWKDkI&t=3601s)

States today where it's primary behavioral characteristic is arrogance and frankly those are the seeds of destruction of any political system when it gets to that point in time in my lifetime the media the control of the media has become so consolidated it is it's that's not just frightening it's it's something to lament because there isn't a possibility of getting free an active debate you know in this this issue yes when you were a journalist in Vietnam you mentioned the photo the photographs were taken that was the most televised war in history there are two things that helped the anti-war movement it was the most televised war in history you have that classic picture a little Vietnamese girl naked running napalm and all the body bags coming back yes yet during the Persian Gulf War and afterwards with almost a half million Iraqi children dying after we blew up their infrastructure and almost no body bags coming back and our press had never shown his pictures of the decimation of Baghdad how do we we rally against a war with no body bags and no televised destruction of the civilian population what I find very interesting is that throughout the world today there is building a movement an anti-war movement of surprising strength with surprising speed and and it's almost happening from the roots of the soils of people who who know instinctively now what this is all about it's very difficult to engender this kind of feeling in the United States when the the drumbeats get louder and louder continually throughout the day you know and it's a very difficult task to overcome when you don't have independent any independent media when

01:02:00 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QOeSSWKDkI&t=3720s)

independent any independent media when it transnational corporations control them bottom lines are important to them you know my first book was to have been published by HarperCollins and they wanted a chapter removed at the end of the day everything was clear they wanted one shot to removed and and it would have made the killing a king just a mafia killing I couldn't do that some people still think it might have been better to do it and then come back with it later but I don't think so it was too integrated the forces were to integrate yes lady back there were you asking a question oh yes in your opinion did he know this was coming how worried was he for his security I'm sorry can you speak a little um in your opinion how worried was Martin King for his security and how much do you think he knew that he was at risk and that this might happen to him well I mean he your honor how prepared he was or how and he did a long years before the years before he was almost killed many years before when he was ahead doing a book signing and in Harlem and a woman stabbed him and the minute just by a fraction missed an artery that would have killed he would have died so he but he believed he would be killed didn't know when it would come but he believed he would he would be killed not enough not enough didn't take precautions about being killed didn't take precautions about wiretapping that was done all the time because he said look I don't mind if they know what they hear what we're saying we're not doing anything illegal let them hear and what we look at that now and we say well how glorious naivete that is because of course you're not doing anything illegal but they understand your strategy your movements say everything about you this is the

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say everything about you this is the enemy you're dealing with here all right okay I don't know how much time they're telling I don't have too much time huh two more yes yeah I think after the assassination of JFK he told Coretta that he was going to be killed he always knew he was gonna be killed somewhere along one but it seemed while mostly as if he had a special knowledge at that time he was planning a treat at kiss Emily with Thomas Merton many things it was exhausted depressed but I think he knew towards the end that this was going to happen well I think the assassination of Malcolm moved him more I think that so I was I think a very sobering event for him okay one more question is there anyone who hasn't asked a question oh yeah all right well let's yeah the military unit the Pentagon where did all that started was this an autonomous unit somebody had to make the decisions and for the the orders to go well what have you learned about all right try to understand this in 1967 a hundred cities burned this country in autumn of 67 the Pentagon was put under siege there two hundred thousand people at the at the Pentagon putting it literally under siege someone told me that they had a friend who was 180 and was one of the military aides and he was up on the

on the parapet of the Pentagon on the day of the demonstration and there was McNamara and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs now the chairman of Joint Chiefs wasn't there McNamara was there the chief of staff was there system chief of staff for intelligence was there and down the line came the question starting with McNamara what do we do about this they were terrified these were barbarians at the gates and the chief of

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barbarians at the gates and the chief of staff shook his head and said I don't know bill what we do about this and he said bill said just give me the go-ahead and I'll take care of this problem and I believe that there was a consensus that Martin King had to go I I believe that President the United States did not know the details of it but I would be very surprised if he didn't know that it was going to happen because on the 31st of March he announced four days before the killing that he was not going to run again so I I would have thought I would have thought this was well known and I would thought today that there's not much doubt that people in the know in this country understand what it is it's being covered up and why it's being covered up and particularly now it'll be covered up more than ever because now more than ever government lacking credibility for another war needs all the credibility that it can get ok thank you for coming back anyone is interested in the book an active state we do have it please feel free to come in and ask any more questions we'll be right in this room you can come this way that way whichever way you like and the book is in the front thanks a lot William pepper is author of an act of state the execution of Martin Luther King it's published by verso on the web at verso

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